

Transforming Time: A New Tool for Youth Justice

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Transforming Time: A New Tool for Youth Justice

Abstract

This paper introduces the idea of time banks and argues for its relevance to youth justice workers. It outlines the purpose and functions of time banks before considering three practical ways in which they can be put to use in contemporary youth justice practice in England and Wales. The paper argues that time banks offer a new possibility for local action by youth justice workers which both improves the immediate circumstances of users and alters the nature of services themselves.

Key words: youth justice, timebanks, assets, reciprocity,

Introduction

Since 1997 anti-social behaviour and youth crime have been at the top of the political agenda (Pitts, 2005), accompanied by rapid changes within the youth justice system in a self-advertised attempt to establish “responsibility” in young people, their families and working class communities. This move to establish the conditions for the “responsible citizen” have occurred alongside attempts to manage poverty and disadvantage (Muncie, 2006). In an era when the troubled and troublesome young people are no longer recognized as the same (Goldson, 2002), the purpose of youth justice has become

obscured, leading to an effort to use criminal justice measures to resolve social problems. Muncie (2004: 142) draws on the ideas of Pitts (2001) to argue that policy now 'seeks new disciplinary techniques rather than developing a political commitment to forge new routes to an active citizenship based on tolerance, mutual respect and entitlement'.

Pitts (2005) argues that the speed at which reforms have progressed has led to young people charged with trivial offences being drawn into the formal criminal justice system with sentencing outcomes often disproportionate to the offences committed. Breached Anti Social Behaviour Orders have also increased the numbers of young people entering penal institutions despite, in many cases, having no previous criminal record. Whilst accepting the need for young peoples' criminality to be addressed, Pitts questions the paradigm from which this operates. Drawing, for example, on Currie (1991) he highlights an "opportunity model", developing young peoples' identities and sense of self-esteem by participation in the same social, recreational and vocational activities as peers, at the same frequency of those peers. For Pitts steady and adequate *income* is the means to achieving this end. Unfortunately, as any youth justice worker will know, money is exactly what, in many families, is in very short supply. This paper suggests that, for some important purposes, an alternative exists to financial income. Recasting people as assets and the time they have at their disposal as a non-monetary form of currency provides youth justice workers with a device outside the traditional tool box. It is one, however, we argue here, which deserves to form a part of their daily repertoire.

Time Banking

Time banking is based on the ideas of Edgar Cahn (2000a) who developed the idea of Time Dollars. Time Dollars were established to allow the exchange of goods and services in communities where money is in short supply but where skills, talents and time are plentiful. These Time Dollars (hereafter referred to by the UK term 'time credits') are designed so that voluntary actions carried out by community members do not simply generate a psychological reward but also have a practical reward: time credits. Each hour of activity receives one time credit equivalent to an hour. Regardless of skill utilised, production quality, tasks completed or scarcity: one hour equals one hour equals one hour.

Once earned, Time Dollars can then be used to access goods and 'purchase' services, either provided by other individuals within a time credit network or by participating community organisations. Traditionally, as laid out by Cahn, they are exchanged for services from fellow community members and so help to foster personal relationships (this links to the underpinning aim of social capital, which is discussed in the next section). An example of this system in operation will illustrate this relationship. Bob uses three time credits a week to have Lisa visit him at home because he is housebound, and to do some shopping for him. Lisa earns three time credits for doing this and uses one of them to have her hair cut by Sue who earns one credit for every hour it takes.

Sue then uses these credits to be taught the piano by Bob, who thus earns his credits to have Lisa visit him and do some shopping.

All of this interaction is recorded by a 'time broker', who is responsible for distributing the credits and maintaining records, but also for recruiting more people to the time bank to increase the range of skills and, therefore, services, that are on offer. A number of other models now exist since Cahn first developed this idea. For example recent research by one of the authors (Gregory, 2008) provided an in-depth study of a time centre in the South Wales valleys. Here the time bank also provides a range of community events which can be accessed by time credits. Members can use time credits to play bingo each week, attend cabaret acts, plays and education courses (cooking, IT, first aid and music courses being just a few that are available). These operate on the standard time bank basis: an hour at each event is worth one time credit. In doing so, the time centre illustrates an essential aspect of the original Cahn concept. He argued that social programmes would only succeed when the "labour of the consumer" was actively engaged in their operation. Cahn called this process 'co-production', and time banks, he argued, were a practical mechanism for making this happen. The fundamental objective of co-production is thus an alteration in how public services are delivered (see Bovaird, 2007 and Needham, 2007)

Co-production

Co-production is thus the idea that services are most successfully delivered when both the producers and recipients of services are *jointly engaged* in securing beneficial outcomes. Co-production is based on four core values: people as assets; redefining work; reciprocity; and social capital. Cahn believes that these four core values would be realized when service users were no longer viewed as passive objects of intervention. Time banks can establish co-production because they reflect the four key considerations:

- **Assets:** in which individuals are not weighed up on the basis of their needs but on what they are able to contribute to their communities.
- **Redefining work:** in which the contributions of women, children, families and communities, disregarded and exploited by the conventional market economy, are rewarded and recognised through time credits.
- **Reciprocity:** in which the involvement of people in shaping and delivering services is encouraged by providers and regarded as of equal value to their own.
- **Social capital:** in which individuals and families are regarded as the greatest asset of any neighbourhood or community and one which is capable of being increased and extended.

The issues of reciprocity and social capital, in particular, draw on wider debates in the social sciences and need some further exploration here, in order to draw out their application in youth justice work.

Reciprocity rests on the idea that exchanges between parties share equally the conditions of exchange but where this exchange generates an obligation. Titmuss's (1970) famous discussion of blood donation located that exchange within a wider framework of altruism and welfare. Yet reciprocity need not be an expression of altruistic pursuit. Fitzpatrick (2005), for example, suggests that it can just as easily reflect a self-interested motivation, rather than regard for others (for more information on motivations see Le Grand, 1997 and 2003). He argues that New Labour social policy-making is based on a "carrot and stick" approach rooted in self-interested motivations, where incentives and disincentives are developed to secure a common good. In this way reciprocity is used to discipline the ill-disciplined, an approach which can be seen in New Labour's youth crime strategies (i.e. the Respect agenda), clothed in the rhetoric of rights and responsibilities.

However such an approach is based on the belief that reciprocal relations are capable of enforcement, and this can be hazardous. Titmuss warned against gifts which were not freely given and a similar argument is made by Land and Rose (1985). Enforced reciprocity, in which the 'donor' is an unwilling participant, threatens to elbow aside 'respect' and undermine any sense of reciprocity. Time banking offers a solution to their dilemma. Rather than obliging young people to help their community as punishment, time banking provides a mechanism in which a young person's contribution leads to a range of reciprocal exchanges within community assets.

With time credits being able to access driving lessons, education or social events young people enter a two-way reciprocal relationship with their community. Time banking therefore alters how young people and their communities engage and interact. Time banking thus sits between self-interest and what Fitzpatrick (2005: 54) terms “altruistic reciprocity” where ‘the acts of generosity we receive are passed on to others rather than simply returned, as in a commercial transaction’. Enlightened self interest has been regularly explored as a basis for policy-making (see, for example, Deacon 1998). It does capture a sense in which the practical operation of time-banking reflects an underlying sense of motivation in which individuals choose to contribute to the social good, without the need of a state enforced checklist of social duties.

The result of such time bank exchanges, Cahn (2000a) argues, is an increase in social capital, a proposition taken up widely in subsequent time bank research (see for example, Seyfang and Smith, 2002; Seyfang, 2004 and James, 2005). Putnam’s (2000) original formulation distinguishes between *bonding social capital*, which he argues exists between homogenous groups to the exclusion of others and *bridging social capital* which connects a wider range of individuals and is more encompassing of different social groupings. Putnam claimed preference for this latter form and argued that social capital within communities was in decline. It is a key claim of time bank advocates that they are especially creative of bridging social capital, through member interaction. James (2005), for example, explores data arising from interactions between young people and older people within time banks, to

suggest that they can be effective in overcoming intergenerational barriers within communities by creating bridging capital between them.

Cahn (2000a), however, goes beyond a discussion of social capital creation in the relatively uncontentious areas of bowling and inter-generational contact, to engage with a discussion of collective efficacy, as developed in the Chicago context by Sampson et al (1997). Pearce and Paxton (2005) explain that public efficacy rests on the ability of community members to exercise informal social control. Thus, if young people are committing an act of anti-social behaviour or are truanting from school then the community can intervene to tackle this problem. For Cahn, time banks offer a means to support, and record, the development of collective efficacy in way which directly connects the production of social capital and the long-standing purpose of youth justice services - bridging the gap between young people and the communities by which they are surrounded.

In this way time banks can help realise these four core principles of co-production as they engage and reward the labour of service users, helping create a new parity between the service users and professional providers.

Developing these ideas, the New Economics Foundation (nef, 2004; 2007; 2008a) claims that co-production is a practical means by which inequalities in health, education and housing can be tackled. It provides a paradigm shift in the operation of welfare systems which allows participation within services to generate self-reliance and collective efficiency: and so

ending the definition of people based upon their needs. This shift in practice will alter systems so that they can provide mutual support and problem identification, build social networks and develop supportive relationships (nef, 2008b). The benefits of time banks in relation to building social networks within communities have also been established by Seyfang and Smith (2002) and Seyfang (2004). This research shows that the four core aspects of co-production can be fostered in communities which embrace time bank practice, allowing service users to take on new roles and build fresh relationships throughout the community.

Time Banks and Youth Justice

If these are some of the general considerations which surround the use of time banks in social welfare settings, this paper now turns to their practical application in the specific field of youth justice. In terms of mainstream youth justice theorising, time bank approaches have clear affinities with descriptions of restorative justice, a topic which has preoccupied policy-makers and researchers over the past decade. Indeed, papers on the subject are to be found in the first and most recent volumes of *Youth Justice* (see Earle and Newburn 2001; Lynch 2008). Yet, echoing earlier warnings (Haines and Drakeford 1998: 229ff), it remains the case that such approaches continue, even in their most liberal Braithwaite-like (see, e.g. Braithwaite 1989; Braithwaite 2002) manifestations, rely upon focusing the need for change upon the offender, to bring her or him into line with dominant ideas of acceptable behaviour. Yet, as youth justice workers know, very many young

people who appear before the Courts have themselves been the victims of sustained unacceptable behaviour at the hands of adults. That experience extends both before and during their experience of the criminal justice system (see Goldson and Coles 2005). Aspects of restorative justice – its emphasis on reintegration of the individual and the community, for example – are clearly apparent in time bank approaches. However, in time banking the relationship is not one between an apologetic ‘offender’ and an aggrieved ‘victim’. Reciprocity means that the equation can be made more equal. Young people in trouble with the law can contribute positively but, once that has been demonstrated, can draw on the collective resources of the community in return. It allows for an approach which recognises needs, as well as marking disapproval of deeds and promotes respect and mutuality in problem-solving.

Thus it is that each of Cahn’s four principles, set out above, underpin the practice examples which follow. Within time banks everyone is regarded as an asset, no matter what their current situation or previous history. Young people caught up in the youth justice system struggle to escape its fiercely labelling embrace. In time banks, no individual is primarily understood as an ‘offender’. All are treated on the basis of what they can give, rather than what they have taken in the past. What individuals can contribute – the asset they represent – is defined by time banks on the widest possible basis. All young people have talents which can be put to work and which can be rewarded. Baden-Powell (1908) regarded those who kicked over the traces as amongst the most adventurous and enterprising of their generation. Their abilities needed to be harnessed and put to good use. They were, in modern, terms,

time-rich and cash-poor. A century later, official discourse in relation to young people in trouble with the law is very different. Time banks recover that sense of young people as potential contributors to their own communities, rebuilding fractured senses of reciprocity, rather than feeding fears and emphasising alienation, producing social capital as they do so. Moreover, because participation is recognised through time credits, the process has the potential to develop in a series of self-reinforcing positive cycles. Young people who contribute their time are able to use the credits they earn to participate in, and help to shape, a series of other community activities. In this way they are empowered to use their time in a way which not only helps them to build “bridging social capital” with their community, but also to gain access to services that their lack of income denies them.

This paper now turns to three practical applications of time bank principles in youth justice settings. The first deals with early and preventative work; the second concentrates on young people who find themselves before the Courts; the last discusses a project which links people in custody to time bank activity.

Time Banks and Anti-social Behaviour

Use of time banks to help prevent young people becoming involved in crime was highlighted during some recent research (author's own, 2009). Here, the time centre referred to earlier produces an annual pantomime. The Centre manager found himself approached by local community support officers, asking when rehearsals were due to begin again because, during such periods, anti-social behaviour by young people, hanging about the streets, disappeared. The local disquiet which the presence of young people had caused in this South Wales village is part of a far wider phenomenon. Durai and Nollet (2008: 22), for example, report that 'there was a 60 per cent increase in complaints from adults about teenagers "hanging around" in their local area' between 1992 and 2006, and that 92 per cent of elderly people state that they fear young people. While the specifics of the study can be contested, the general conclusion – that older people fear younger ones, as a potential source of anti-social behaviour and crime – has long been borne out in research studies (see, for example, Maxwell 1984).

In an attempt to build on its success in engaging young people, the Centre is to establish a youth time project. Amongst other activities it will operate a sports "taster" programme in which young people will be able to try out activities at local sports clubs without any money changing hands. Instead, young people will 'pay' for the taster sessions through time credits earned at the Centre. For those who discover a liking for particular sports, and join a local club, membership will also be available on a time-credit basis. Thereafter, time spent in participation at a local club will, itself, earn time credits which can be used to access additional activities at the Centre.

A second practical example of preventative work through time banks can be found in the nearby Gwent constabulary area. Here, a concerted attempt has been made to re-focus policing on a high-crime estate where arson and a ram raid had led to the closure of a local police station. As part of a community-led, problem-solving set of solutions, a Timebank Project has been established on the estate, allowing young people to earn credits by undertaking projects within the community and exchanging them against a menu of rewards, including driving lessons and mountain bikes (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary [HMIC] 2007). The success of the combined set of initiatives led to a fall in reported crimes on the estate from 140 in May 2005 to 40 by May 2006. The contribution made by the Timebank Project to this outcome led, over the following twelve months, to its replication in other parts of the Force area, with Timebanks used to involve young people in activities of community benefit, such as cleaning graffiti and litter collection, with credits exchanged for rewards including shop and cinema vouchers (HMIC 2008).

All this is possible, of course, because of a change in basic thinking, in which young people are regarded as a fundamental asset to their communities, and the time they invest in community activities is regarded as part of the wider social capital of the neighbourhood.

When young people are recognised as assets, as people who can make a contribution and not as people who are labelled as problematic or

difficult, then it becomes possible to concentrate on what they can offer, not what they need.

The starting point of this process removes the agenda from the hands of the service provider, placing it jointly in the hands of users and workers. In all this, the role of both services and users are altered. Asking young people what they perceive to be the problems of their community, and how they feel they can be dealt with, allows them to have some control over their active citizenship. Simultaneously however the service provider is still able to meet its mandate. It is at this point that the two agendas (that of the provider and user), while still distinct, begin to connect with each other. Moving on the individual from being simply a consumer of a service to an active member of it alters the operation of the service itself and provides a political space for young people to engage in discussion and debate about their communities, and to discover solutions for themselves which they can then help to deliver. As well as changing services it begins to create a citizen who is engaged with the local and the political, constructing a meaningful role which a consumer of a service can never inhabit. It also changes the value system through which events are accessed. Instead of relying on financial resources, young people are able to access events, activities and services by helping other people.

The discussion outlined above illustrates ways in which time bank principles can be applied to preventative work in youth justice, drawing on ideas of rehabilitation and restoration. The work described relies not on additional resources, but on re-defining the way in which existing services are

organised and used. We now turn to a second use of time credits which has been developed in America and which deals directly with sentencing and punishment of young offenders: in what is known as the Time Dollar Youth Court

The Time Dollar Youth Court

Time Dollar Youth Courts (hereafter, TDYCs) began in 1996 in Washington's District of Columbia and continue to operate there. It came about as a partnership between the Time Dollar Institute, the University of the District of Columbia School of Law and the DC Superior Court. They came together 'for the purpose of jointly developing a diversion programme which provides a meaningful alternative to the traditional adjudicatory format in juvenile cases' (Cahn 2000b).

The presiding judge of the Superior Court, Chief Justice Eugene Hamilton has since described the system at that time as one in which juvenile court proceedings functioned primarily as a rite of passage in which a jaded system processed children in a routine, business-as-usual fashion, without innovation, creativity or hope for the future (TDYC, 2003). For both staff and young people it provided only a conveyor belt to further and more serious involvement in crime and the criminal justice system. If the criminal justice system in the United Kingdom is heavily influenced by social class, then in the USA this is further compounded by issues of race. In the District of Columbia over 50% of young black males are currently under court supervision of one

sort or another – either in prison, on parole or probation. One hundred per cent of young people in contact with the criminal justice system were of either African American or Hispanic origins.

Against that background there was an appetite for attempting a radical new initiative. The TDYC came into being through a partnership with the Law School of the University of the District of Columbia. Law students act as presiding judges, but juries are made up entirely of young people who have previously appeared for offences. Jurors are aged from 13 years upwards. Law students also take part through helping monitoring compliance with Youth Court dispositions and serving as buddies and mentors to volunteers (American Bar Association 2002). As early as 1999, a report by the University of the District of Columbia's Institute for Public Safety and Justice, concluded that, 'the Time Dollar Youth Court makes it one of the largest youth courts in the country...populated with older juveniles engaged in more serious offenses than is the norm nationwide' (TDYC Annual Report 2008).

In its early years, all hearings of the Youth Court took place at the University itself. All activities of the TDYC begin at an Intake Unit where referrals are taken, young people interviewed in the presence of their parents or guardians and dates set for an appearance before the Youth Court. At each hearing, a jury hears the facts of each case, the charge, the police version of events and the testimony of the young people and his/her parent. After a dialogue and questioning period, jurors deliberate and decide on a sanction. A mandatory part of any outcome is that the young person is required to serve

as a Youth Court juror for a period of ten weeks, including a two week period of intense juror training. Other disposals available to the TDYC include apologising and making reparation to victims, completing up to 90 hours community service and enrolling on mentoring and drug abuse programmes. To provide just one example, a quarter of cases heard by the Court involve truancy. In response, the programme has negotiated a mentoring scheme with local schools in which, as part of their sentence, young people spend time working with younger children, helping to improve basic reading and writing. Turning truants into tutors is a scheme which has all the hall-marks of the time bank approach. It regards young people in trouble as assets who can help others; it turns time into a currency which can release activity which might otherwise be left dormant; it relies on a set of reciprocal relationships in which school authorities, as well as young people themselves are jointly engaged in a new initiative which, in turn results in a newly generated store of social capital, created at the point where individual and collective activity comes together.

Young people who serve as jurors earn Time Dollars for the hours they put in. Time Dollars can then be redeemed against a range of items, such as recycled computers, events at youth projects, participation in an extensive summer programme, savings bonds for college and against the costs of admission and application fees at the University of the District of Columbia.

In its first year, the Youth Court dealt with 150 cases. By 2003 this had risen to over 400, with referrals mostly from public prosecutors, the police and

the public school system. On any Saturday, between 30 and 40 jurors were involved in hearing cases, including a specialist court composed of older youths released from custody, dealing with older defendants. Furthermore, in 2003, the programme instituted a systematic collection of recidivism data. The six month recidivism rate for those who had successfully completed a Youth Court programme was 7%. At 12 months it had risen to 17%, compared to 30% for a control group of young people who had not been through the Youth Court process (TDYC, 2004). These figures are now published annually, with the 2007 analysis showing a fall in recidivism at the 12 month stage to 14% (TDYC, 2008).

In 2004, the number of referrals to the Court passed the 600 figure. It also moved its operation from the University to the Superior Court's own courtrooms, cementing its place as a mainstream part of the justice system.

Any project of this sort faces set-backs, as well as advances and, for a few weeks, in April 2007, the Court closed when a change in the elected Mayor of the city led to a deletion of its budget. A vigorous campaign, involving young users of the Court and their families led to a swift reversal of the position and, today, the Youth Court operates on a greater scale than ever before. In that year, the TDYC received 778 referrals, heard 639 cases, involved 639 young people in juror training and saw 444 young people successfully complete their programmes. Over 70% of referrals came directly from the Metropolitan Police Department. In terms of charges, 34% involved simple assault, 25% involved truancy, 15% were for disorderly conduct and

11% for possession of marijuana. The Court reached its peak on 17th December, with 108 young people sitting on juries at the Superior Court's building.

By now, on any Saturday, between four and eight youth juries operate at the main DC Courthouse, with over 850 cases going through the Court in the twelve months to mid 2008. TDYCs have also been developed in Wisconsin and Pennsylvania. An Urban Institute of youth courts across the United States concluded that each case successfully diverted from the main criminal justice system saved the taxpayer \$9,200 (Delaney 2007).

As well as establishing the TDYC, the University of the District of Columbia has also created a Youth Grand Jury with a team of law students and a member of its professorial staff, to provide a voice for young people inside the youth justice system. The Grand Jury was charged with collecting and analysing facts and speaking to adult decision makers, in order to help make the system work better for young people. In a survey of youth justice initiatives nationwide, the American Bar Association (2002) concluded that, 'the Time Dollar programme is the only one to move beyond service delivery to system reform'.

Could any of this be recreated in the youth justice context of England and Wales? The challenge lies not in the difference between the two systems, but between attitudes of mind. There is nothing practical, we contend, which

prevents a time bank youth court experiment being mounted here. What is required is a conceptual shift from regarding young people in trouble as, at best, objects of concern, to potential partners in shaping their own futures. Using time as a currency can help unlock the ingenuity, enthusiasm and ambition which lies buried beneath the powerlessness and sense of surrender which is thrust upon so many young people in their experience of the current criminal justice system.

However these ideas are limited to youth justice work within the community, and of course youth justice work is not only conducted in this setting. There is also a further role that time banks can play, and this can be illustrated by work in the United Kingdom, at Gloucester prison.

Time Banks Behind Bars

The final example in this paper focuses on a project which has been operated through a Gloucestershire time bank – Fair Shares – which, since 2003, has operated a partnership with HMP Gloucester. From 2005 onwards, as a result of patient and painstaking negotiation, prisoners at the gaol have been able to earn time credits in a range of different ways, including a bicycle repair project, a Listeners' scheme and mentoring work.

The bicycle repair project was the first to be established and, according to a recent evaluation report (Fair Shares 2008), has been highly successful. The scheme works with a charity which collects donated bikes, brings them to the prison for repair and refurbishment, and then collects them for dispersal in developing countries. Between 40 – 45 prisoners are involved each year, servicing 200 bicycles.

Time credits are earned for the work undertaken and can be used in one of three ways: they can be donated to families, passed to other participant organisations within Fair Shares, or placed in a “good will pot” from which any members of the time bank can withdraw credits. Because each recipient – either as an individual, or as an organisation – has to be a member of the time bank, the hours created become part of the wider pool of new currency. Beneficiaries themselves undertake activities through which time credits are earned, meaning that each hour donated via the prison schemes is multiplied many times over.

Time credits donated to families have been used to secure practical help with gardening, decorating and transport. The strengthened social networks which participation in the time bank brings is a secondary, but substantial, asset which the use of time credits in this way provides. Most of all, of course, the capacity of individuals in custody to contribute directly to the well being of their families helps recreate an element of reciprocity which, in almost every other way, imprisonment destroys.

Where credits earned are donated to other time bank organisations, one of the main beneficiary groups has been the prison's own Visitors' Centre. Here, time credits have been exchanged, by the Centre, for a wide range of goods and services, including transport to the Centre and catering. Time credits placed by prisoners in the Good Will Pot have been used over an even broader sphere, including use by day hospice attendees for gardening, home clearance and cleaning, while housebound individuals have used the credits in exchange for shopping and by a Day Centre has used them for redecoration.

Time banking in Gloucestershire is amongst the most developed in the United Kingdom. In 2007, for example, over 22,000 hours were exchanged through the time bank, with approximately 3,000 coming from the work in HMP Gloucester. The hours from the prisoners have allowed for around 2,000 assignments to be carried out in the community (Ministry of Justice 2008). Of course, there are many practical difficulties involved in developing and running an innovative scheme in a prison setting – as many readers of this Journal will know. Even with the support of very senior staff, change happens very slowly. Even with a scheme in place, practical problems, such as the sudden transfer of prisoners to other institutions can disrupt or destroy arrangements very carefully put in place. Nevertheless, the success of the Gloucestershire project has recently received recognition from the Ministry of Justice. A conference was held in London in August 2008, designed to link up ten further prisons with their local time banks, with the intention of replicating the Gloucester approach in this wider network by January 2009.

From the perspective of this paper, the conclusions we draw from the Gloucester work are three fold. Firstly, it demonstrates that, with determination and imagination, it is possible to apply time bank principles and practices in places where innovation is at a premium and resistance to change of a higher order. Secondly, that the Gloucester experience ought to represent a starting point, rather than conclusion, in developing time bank ideas in such settings. If individuals can earn time credits in custody, then why can they not be exchanged, by such individuals on release? For all but a small minority of discharged prisoners, the period of return to the community is characterised by very little money, and long periods of unoccupied time. Time bank participation has the potential to draw something positive out of that combination, by turning time, if not into money, then at least into something which can be turned into a means of exchange. Finally, it seems to us, these ideas are just as applicable, if not more so, in the case of young people in custody, as to the adult prisoner population. If time banks can provide a means of demonstrating that those young people who have to be imprisoned still have positive things to offer and that such offers can be made in ways which regenerate social capital, even in the most unpropitious circumstances, then the notion has a very great deal to recommend it.

Conclusion

The purpose of this paper has been to argue for an innovative and effective addition to the armoury of youth justice workers. It is clearly the case that, at this innovative stage in their development, some of the difficult questions which all programmes in the criminal justice have to face – such as, issues of implementation, sanctioning for non-compliance, defining and measuring of ‘success’ – are yet to be addressed and resolved. Projects run on the enthusiasm of committed individuals, and the literature produced reflects this sense of missionary zeal. Taking a Weberian view of the routinisation of charisma (Weber 1968) it can be seen that social welfare initiatives often falter when attempts are made to generalise, and normalise, success gained in one context, by transplanting ideas into others (see Bryman 1992, for a more general application of this concept).

Yet, the practical projects discussed in this paper suggest that such workers possess two particular advantages in bringing about change of the sort described here. Firstly, they operate very much in local contexts. Gibbons et al. (2005) suggest that the local and community disparities which underpin levels of crime require a local response, and time banks rely entirely on such a local mobilisation. Secondly, youth justice workers rely on an ability to reframe the behaviour of a young person in a way which demonstrates to others that there is more to that individual than their involvement in crime. Taylor-Gooby (2005), in an analogous field, shows that while attitudes towards lone mothers are negative when portrayed as passive beneficiaries of welfare, they become positive when seen to be making a reciprocal contribution. Youth justice workers have to apply the same technique to young

people in trouble with the law. The contribution which time bank thinking can make to restorative justice approaches was discussed earlier and does so, we believe, at two different levels. Practically, they turn a commodity in plentiful supply – time – into a currency which can unlock a series of creative and constructive social exchanges. Ideologically, they re-form a set of core relationships – between the young person and the community, between service users and providers – in ways which re-position young people as assets who can, even in the least promising circumstances, make a contribution to expanding social capital. The effect is to re-establish the ideas of mutuality and reciprocity between young people and their communities and to reinforce the contribution which youth justice can make to repairing fractured relationships and shaping more productive futures. The contribution which time banks can make is no longer a matter of theoretical speculation. There are well developed, practical examples, of which some have been set out in this paper, which show what can be done. What is needed now is some of the commitment and ingenuity, which has so often been the hall-mark of youth justice practitioners and services, to help to make it happen.

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